

Town Hall Expansion Project

The Town of Superior is considering construction of an addition to Town Hall to increase citizen/customer efficiency and convenience, build additional public meeting space and consolidate the operations of several departments on one site.

In an effort to address questions and concerns that have been raised, Town staff and I have prepared some additional background information presented in a question and answer format.

Q: Why is a Town Hall expansion needed?

A: In order to enhance service delivery to our customers and to operate in the most cost effective manner possible, the Town is considering combining all administrative personnel at one location. Currently, several members of the administrative staff are physically separated across five separate facilities. Residents and others coming to Town Hall expecting to meet with someone at the Building Department, Parks & Recreation Department, Public Works Department or Sheriff's Office all have to be re-directed from Town Hall to the other facilities, two of which are a half-mile away. This causes frustration and additional time lost for citizens to reach the services they are seeking. Town staff located at the remote sites also must frequently travel to Town Hall for meetings with citizens and other staff members multiple times, often on a daily basis. Each of the remote locations also has extensive deferred maintenance challenges and other limitations, all of which could be eliminated by co-locating the departments at Town Hall. Below is a list of the five locations:

- Town Hall (124 E. Coal Creek Drive)
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space (127 E. Coal Creek Drive)
- Building Department and Superior Chamber of Commerce (122 W. William)
- Public Work and Utilities (405 Center Drive Unit E, Superior Marketplace)
- Boulder County Sheriff Substation (405 Center Drive, Unit F, Superior Marketplace)

Q: Has the Town staff really grown so much in recent years that a Town Hall expansion is necessary?

A: The current Town Hall facility was last renovated in 1999. While the majority of the facility remains functional, the number of staff members has grown to support the many changes in the community over the past 17 years. Currently the Town employs 33 full-time equivalent staff members. This is a substantially lower employment level than other comparably-sized municipalities because the Town employs consultants and contractors for a variety of operational support and maintenance activities – under full-time staff oversight and direction. During the last 17 years Superior's population has increased from 9,300 residents to approximately 13,000 residents today. Responding to this growth and other changes, the Town staff has increased in the following areas over the past 17 years:

- Public Works added 4 employees when the Superior Metropolitan Districts 2 & 3 functions were assumed by the Town in 2003. These districts were established when the Rock Creek Ranch subdivision was built to initially provide water and sewer services

to residents. Other reasons for increased Public Works staff include the need over time for improved oversight of the Town's utility systems, engineering and construction activities and facilities, meeting increased federal regulations for water and wastewater treatment and roadway standards, and providing necessary maintenance of the Town's aging infrastructure assets.

- Sheriff's Office added 3 Deputies and administrative staff to increase the level of public safety and provide capable response to service needs in the community over the years.
- Parks and Recreation has overseen the construction of several new parks facilities, such as Founders Park, Dog Park, Disc Golf Park, Mountain Bike Park, renovated Historical Museum, Asti Park, and acquired or partnered to acquire six open space properties. These projects added approximately 250 acres of new Town-owned land and facility assets to manage and maintain. The Town also assumed control of the two pool facilities in our community, coordinating all maintenance and programming for both. Additionally, the Town has created extensive, year-round recreation program offerings for all ages, including various adult fitness, youth activities and sports camps, outdoor education programs, and annual events and volunteer programs, as well as extensive partnerships with area sports teams. Six full-time staff members have been added over the years for the management of these facilities and programs.

It merits noting that with 2003 dissolution of Superior Metropolitan Districts 2 & 3, and the staff additions described above to perform these new duties, the Town assumed these functions at a net cost savings of over \$250,000 per year. This resulted in a direct and immediate property tax decrease for residents (except Original Town residents). The Superior Metropolitan Districts 2 & 3 operating property mill levy was 14 mills at that time. The 2003 dissolution ballot measure called for this rate to drop to no more than 9.4 mills. The actual mill levy increase was 6.9 mills (which was a 50% reduction from the prior year). With the dissolution, the sales and use tax revenue sharing agreements with these independent district entities also ended, effectively keeping more revenue in the Town of Superior budget to be controlled by the Town's elected officials. Also, prior to dissolution, the Town established a small Public Works Department with two administrative staff as a result of the 2000 Superior Metropolitan District 1 (which provided various utility services) transition from a developer-controlled district to Town control. The SMD1 transfer helped the Town financially. Instead of the required transfer of 68% of undesignated Superior Marketplace revenues to SMD1, the Town Board could determine how much revenue SMD1 needed, and transfer only this amount, up to 68%.

Q: What about the vacant spaces in the Superior Marketplace and other areas around Town? Couldn't those be used instead of expanding Town Hall?

A: Town staff has been leasing previously vacant space in the Superior Marketplace for the past 5 years to provide office space for the Sheriff's Office and the Public Works Department. While this arrangement has worked on an interim basis, it is not a good long-term solution for several reasons. First, the space is temporary and the Town does not own or control the space. If the landlord wants to raise the rent or terminate the lease so the space can be rented to another long-term tenant, the Town will be forced to relocate the users from that space. This

has already happened to the Public Works Department, which has been required to move two times in the last two years. With each move comes new tenant finish expenses plus the disruption and costs associated with moving and establishing new offices. Since the leased space is considered temporary, the Town has tried to minimize improvements resulting in space not well-suited to current needs (for example, Public Works is in a formal bridal shop, with a staff member awkwardly housed in a former changing room). The added cost of leasing is also a factor. The Town is presently spending approximately \$30,000 per year to lease this extra space, costs that would be eliminated if the same departments were moved into the Town Hall. Staff time lost by travelling back and forth is estimated to cost \$10,000 per year. Potential lost retail sales tax revenue is another consideration for determining where the Town's offices should be located. The Superior Marketplace was developed for sales tax-generating retail tenants, and having office uses in the space would cost the Town significant sales tax revenue if the space could be otherwise leased to retail sales tax-generating businesses.

Q: What about locating the Town Hall in the new Town Center development?

A: Relocating Town Hall to the new Town Center development had been considered for several years starting in 2012. The Town Center Design Guidelines approved in 2013 contemplate the option of a new Town Hall building within the Town Center development. However, following considerable Board discussion at the April 2015 Retreat, the Board directed staff to pursue expansion of the existing Town Hall building instead. The primary reason for not wanting to move the Town Hall to Town Center was the considerable cost (\$4 million or more), which would then mean less funding would be available for other future community spaces in Town Center, such as library space and community meeting rooms. Over the next year or two, the Town will be working with the Town Center developer and the public to determine the location, design and available funding for the best community spaces in the Town Center.

Q: Is consideration being given to moving just the Parks and Recreation staff to office space within the new Boulder Valley Ice facility?

A: The Boulder Valley Ice facility has offered to provide office space to the Town's Parks and Recreation staff at no cost. Town staff is currently evaluating this option along with the possibility of centralizing the Parks and Recreation staff in Town Hall. Moving the Parks and Recreation staff to the Boulder Valley Ice building could provide advantages by having Town staff closely aligned with the largest recreation facility in Town. A decision on this will be finalized before the Town Hall expansion plans are finalized.

Q: What about the Sheriff's Office? Since they are under contract to provide law enforcement to the Town, doesn't that mean they are also responsible for providing their own office space?

A: The Town's contract with the Sheriff's Office requires the Town to provide office space. The Sheriff's Deputies who patrol Superior need an adequate facility to securely store equipment, conduct investigations, prepare reports, and meet with citizens. The current Sheriff's Substation is located in a space on a month-to-month lease. Potentially having to move the Sheriff's Office with one month's notice is not a good position for the Town for an essential public safety function such as law enforcement. Adequate, permanent facilities within

the Town Hall that are easily accessible to the public are important objectives of the Town Hall expansion.

Q: It seems like this process is moving very fast. What's the rush and why haven't I heard about it until now?

A: While it seems the project has been moving quickly, the Town Board has discussed the expansion at several meetings over the past year on these dates:

- April 21, 2015 – Discussion at Town Board Retreat about expanding the current Town Hall versus moving to the Town Center.
- August 21 & 23, 2015 – Finance Committee Meeting to review and discuss the proposed 2016 Budget.
- September 14, 2015 – Policy discussion on proposed 2016 Budget items, which included Town Hall expansion.
- October 26, 2015 – Board approved the 2016 Budget, which included funding for Town Hall expansion.
- March 14, 2016 – Board approved funding for Town Hall expansion design work.
- April 25, 2016 – Board met with the architectural firm preparing Town Hall designs.
- May 9, 2016 – Three floorplan proposals presented to the Board.

It is also important to note that shortly after the 1999 Town Hall expansion was completed, the Board at that time elected to purchase the lot to the west of Town Hall to provide expansion and parking options for the future. Town Hall expansions were considered in 2001 and 2006, but were never completed. In 2013 the Town Board also discussed, but ultimately rejected, the possibility of installing temporary buildings to meet immediate needs of consolidation.

Q: What about the cost; why is this going to cost \$2.86 million? Is a tax increase necessary to fund this project?

A: The cost figure was calculated based on the projected additional need for space, approximately 10,000 square feet, and current commercial construction costs of \$286 per square foot. Staff is continuing to evaluate design options to control costs while providing for the necessary space. The funds to complete the project have been budgeted through the Town's capital improvement project fund, and a tax increase will not be necessary to fund the project.

The Board of Trustees and I welcome continued engagement on the Town Hall Expansion project. Please continue to send us your comments and additional questions.